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(54) **Watertight body for accomodating a photographic camera**

(57) A watertight body (10) having a first (1a) and a second (1b) body shell of rigid polymer material that can be joined together for accommodating a photographic camera (11) is designed such that, using a multiple-component injection moulding process, a sealing means (2) comprising elastic polymer material is moulded on an edge (2a) of at least one body shell (1a, 1b) that forms the joint, and a covering means (3) is moulded on surface areas of said body shells and is connected to the body shell by chain looping of the polymer materials. The result is that the body is reliably sealed against water and is nevertheless inexpensive and simple to manufacture. For a simple and correspondingly inexpensive recyclability of the body, the body shells (1a, 1b) can be crushed without separation of the polymer materials using known devices, with the resultant material mix being usable as an admixture for the manufacture of new camera components.

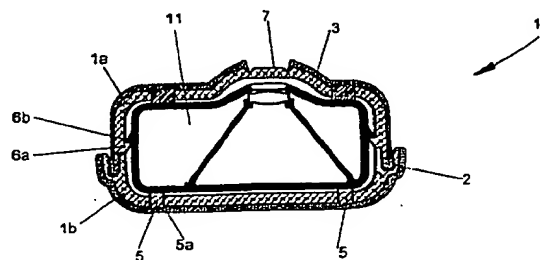


Fig. 6

EP 0 791 850 A2

Description

The invention relates to a watertight body for accommodating a photographic camera having two body shells which can be joined together and comprise a rigid polymer material.

Photographic cameras with an outer body enclosing the camera for protection against the effects of moisture and dust are known. For example, US-PS 4 882 600 as well as DE-OS 37 21 556, DE-OS 37 33 403 and DE-OS 44 14 854 or JP 7-104367 disclose such bodies, in some cases watertight.

The joint created in the assembled condition of the body elements is mostly sealed using separate elastic sealing elements, for example O-rings, gaiter-like rubber elements, sealing elements etc.

DE-OS 44 14 854 describes a roll film pack consisting of a light-tight core body with roll film, shutter, film transport device, lens etc., said core body being enclosable by two shells formed out of rigid plastic. Sealing of the body shells, which though not watertight is effective against dust and splash water, is achieved by welding the shells together and sealing the joint by means of an elastic but nevertheless stable stuck-on strip.

Configurations of this type are therefore marked by a large number of joinable individual parts, so that manufacture of the body is intensive in time, material and cost.

The object underlying the present invention is to create a watertight body for accommodating a photographic camera that can be designed and manufactured in a simple manner and ensures dependable watertightness. Another object consists in ensuring that the used body be easily and inexpensively recycled.

These objects are achieved in accordance with the invention using the features of claims 1, 20 and 25.

By using a multiple-component injection moulding process for moulding a sealing means made of elastic polymer material, in particular a thermoplastic elastomer, on an edge of at least one body shell that forms the joint, and for connecting it to said body shell by chain looping of the polymer materials, a body can be provided that manages without additional and separately attached sealing elements. The adhesion of the sealing means in accordance with the invention is achieved by the chain looping of the molecules between the material of the body shell and that of the sealing means during moulding. Additional adhesion connectors, such as adhesives or the like, are not necessary.

In the embodiment of the invention, the sealing means is of droplet shape on the edge of the first body shell, with the second body shell having a circumferential groove in which the sealing means is deformed in the assembled state of the body shells such that the camera body is water-tight. Owing to a sealing element-like configuration of the second body shell in the area of the circumferential seal, the latter is well protected against mechanical effects, such as knocks etc.

A covering means moulded on the outer surfaces of

the body shells using the multiple-component injection moulding process is also connected to the body shells by chain looping. By a suitable color additive to the elastomer, a camera body that can be advantageously designed is achievable. Raised areas of the covering means and areas free of the latter ensure in addition a good grip on the camera under water. A carrying means designed as a lug for attachment of a carrying strap or the like forms an integral unit with the covering means, such that a low-cost manufacture is possible without additional fitted parts and handling of the camera under water is further improved. In addition, a good shock-absorbing effect for the camera can be achieved using the "covering means enclosure".

In a further advantageous embodiment, the sealing, covering and carrying means are designed in one piece, i.e. they are moulded on the body shells during one manufacturing process step using the multiple-component injection moulding process, thereby achieving a particularly inexpensive manufacture. The configuration of the body in accordance with the invention further prevents any inadvertent opening of the camera by the user, since the locking means provided on the body shells are concealed by the shells in the connected state.

Thus, a watertight body for accommodating a photographic camera is achievable in accordance with the invention with a minimum number of individual parts to be assembled.

Another advantage during manufacture of a photographic camera made of a first and a second body shell of rigid polymer material which can be joined together and have openings for a lens and a viewfinder, consists in that at least the body shell forming the camera front is moulded in a tool using a rigid polymer material and that in the same tool a covering layer made of an elastic polymer material is then connected to the body shell by chain looping of the polymer materials using the two-pack injection moulding process.

Better recyclability than in the prior art, and hence also better protection of the environment, is achieved in that the body shells are crushed without separation of the polymer materials using known devices, and the resultant material mix is used as an admixture to the new polystyrene material being in a ratio not exceeding 25 : 100. As a result, a greatly improved impact strength is achieved in the newly manufactured camera components when compared with polystyrene.

Further advantages of the invention are shown in the sub-claims and in an embodiment of the invention illustrated in the drawing. The drawing shows in

Fig. 1 the body in accordance with the invention in a front view,

Fig. 2 the front body shell in a side view,

Fig. 3 the body in a rear view,

- Fig. 4 the rear body shell in a side view,
- Fig. 5 in a schematic view the opened body with a camera along the line I-I in Fig. 1, and
- Fig. 6 in a schematic view the watertight closed body with a camera along the line I-I in Fig. 1.

The watertight body 10 comprises a front body shell 1a and a rear body shell 1b for accommodating a photographic camera 11, as schematically shown in Figs. 5 and 6. The camera 11 is a so-called single-use camera, which is loaded with photographic film by the manufacturer and given to a finisher for development of the film after the latter has been exposed. Since cameras of this type are sufficiently known, no further description is provided. It is merely pointed out that the outer camera body shape and the inner shape of the body shells 1a and 1b are matched to one another and have elements/means to which reference is made in the following.

Both body shells 1a and 1b comprise a rigid polymer material, preferably an optically transparent polystyrene. The inner wall of the body shell 1b has engaging elements 6a of nose type that engage with engaging elements 6b provided on the camera wall. The two body shells 1a and 1b are firmly connectable by locking means 9a and 9b. The locking means comprise the locking hooks 9a forming an integral unit with the body shell 1a, and the elastically flexible locking strips 9b forming an integral unit with the body shell 1b. In the assembled state of the body shells, the locking means 9a, 9b are covered by the body walls and are hence not accessible for unlocking. To that end, at least one marked wall area 9d is provided on the body shell 1a that can be cut through using a tool, for example a screwdriver, to unlock at least one of the engaged means 9a and 9b. This is achieved by providing in the wall areas 9d openings in the body shell 1a which are closed only by the thermoplastic covering means 3.

On the body shell 1a, a sealing means 2 of droplet shape and comprising a thermoplastic elastomer, styrene-butadiene (ISO designation:

TE(PEBBS+PP)) is provided on the edge 2a forming the joint of the body, said sealing means being adapted to be pressed into a groove 4 running all round the body shell 1b. In the pressed-in/assembled state of the body shells, watertightness is already achieved by an overdimensioning of the droplet-shaped sealing means 2 in comparison with the groove 4, without the aforementioned locking means 9a and 9b having to be connected to one another. Since the resetting forces of the sealing means act vertically to the joint, no further force is necessary to keep the body shells together in the unloaded state.

The sealing means 2 is designed in its further embodiment on the outer surfaces of both body shells 1a and/or 1b as a covering means 3. The latter has, for improvement of the grip, areas 3a that are raised. Areas

3b free of covering means further improve the grip qualities owing to the resultant differing surface heights. The areas 3b, for example around the lens, carry an informative or decorative label. For carrying the camera, a carrying means 9c designed as a lug for suspension of a carrying strap or the like is provided and forms an integral unit with the covering means 3.

The body shells 1a and 1b, the sealing means 2, the covering means 3 and 3a, the holding means and the carrying means 9c are made in a multiple-component injection moulding process, in particular a two-pack process (2K-process), such that looping of the molecule chains results between the two polymer materials. In a first injection moulding step, the body shell 1a is made from polystyrene and in a second step, without a change of the mould, the sealing means 2, the covering means 3 and 3a and the carrying means 9c designed as a lug are moulded. The manufacture of the body shell 1b from polystyrene with its surface areas of thermoplastic elastomer, styrene-butadiene, is achieved similarly.

The covering means 3 and 3a are best restricted to certain surface areas improving the grip on the camera, but can also comprise the entire outer surface with the exception of the opening for the lens 7, the viewfinder 8, the opening for the flashlight and the areas 3b. By adding suitable colorants, the body can be colored to achieve light-tightness or left transparent.

For expedient and aesthetic reasons a free surface 13 is provided in an area around the lens, which is not covered by the covering layer and on which a C-shaped information plate is arranged on the inside of the body. The information on said plate is readable from the exterior of the body because the body shell 1a is optically transparent. Between the lens 7 and the inner edge formed by the C-shaped plate, a non-transparent cup 14 is provided which encloses the lens and can be made of a thermoplastic elastomer. The C-shaped surface 13 and the information plate are configured such that they partially enclose the non-transparent cup 14.

Furthermore, holding means 5 for the camera 11 are provided in the body wall of both body shells 1a, 1b. These are also formed from the styrenebutadiene elastomer and fill the cylindrical penetrations 5a of the body shells so as to project beyond the inner body wall. In the case of the embodiment shown, the surface of the camera 11 is therefore in contact with the holding elements 5 of the body shells in the state locked by the engaging elements 6a and 6b.

For the body shells 1a, 1b and for the sealing, covering and holding means 2, 3, 3a and 9c, polycarbonate/polyurethane can also be used in addition to the mated combination already stated of polystyrene/styrenebutadiene.

An actuating means 12, comprising a thumbwheel with an integrated release button for film transport and for release, is connected to the body shells in watertight form. To that end, the body shells have a special shaped collar for receiving a sealing element and for supporting

the thumbwheel, which however is not shown in the drawing. The release button designed as a watertight rubber diaphragm release transmits in known manner the release movement by means of a plunger to a release lever arranged inside the camel (also not shown).

After complete exposure of the film, the body 10 is opened using a tool, as already described, and both body shells are conveyed to a device known per se for crushing, for example a shredder, without separation of the materials. The resultant material granulate mixture can be used as an admixture for making new light-impermeable camera components by injection moulding, where exclusively the material combination polystyrene/styrene-butadiene is used for the body shells 1a and 1b and for the sealing, covering and holding means 2, 3, 5, 9c.

The admixture to the new polystyrene material for injection moulding is expediently a maximum of 25% of the new material.

Claims

1. Watertight body (10) having a first (1a) and a second (1b) body shell of rigid polymer material which can be joined together for accommodating a photographic camera (11), **characterized in that** using a multiple-component injection moulding process a sealing means (2) made of elastic polymer material is moulded on an edge (2a) of at least one body shell (1a, 1b) that forms the joint, and is connected to said body shell by chain looping of the polymer materials.
2. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 1, characterized in that the sealing means (2) on said edge (2a) of the first body shell (1a) is of droplet shape, and in that the second body shell (1b) has a circumferential groove (4) in which said sealing means (2) is deformed in the assembled state of the body shells (1a, 1b) such that said camera body is watertight.
3. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 1, characterized in that a covering layer (3) is moulded on surface areas of the body shells (1a, 1b) using a multiple-component injection moulding process, and is connected to said body shells by chain looping of the polymer materials.
4. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 3, characterized in that the covering layer (3, 3a) is transparent or light-tight.
5. Watertight body (10) according to Claims 3 and 4, characterized in that the covering layer (3, 3a) is provided on the outer body shell surfaces and in that in the assembled state of the body shells said covering layer (3) encloses the entire body surface with the provision of openings for a camera lens (7) and a viewfinder (8), and of surface areas (3b).
6. Watertight body (10) according to Claims 3, 4 and 5, characterized in that in an area around the lens a surface (13) is provided which is not covered by the covering layer (3) and on which a C-shaped information plate is arranged on the body.
7. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 6, characterized in that between the lens (7) and the inner edge of the C-shaped plate (13) a non-transparent cup (14) is provided enclosing the lens (7), and the C-shaped plate is transparent.
8. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 7, characterized in that the transparent C-shaped plate partially surrounds the non-transparent cup (14).
9. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 3, characterized in that the covering layer (3) provided on the body shells (1a, 1b) has raised areas (3a) for sure grip.
10. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 9, characterized in that a carrying means (9d) forms an integral unit with the covering layer (3).
11. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 1, characterized in that locking means (9a, 9b) form integral units with the body shells (1a, 1b) for connecting said shells, and in that the locking means are inaccessibly covered in the connected state of said body shells (1a, 1b).
12. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 11, characterized in that the first body shell (1a) has a marked wall area (9c) which can be cut through using a tool for unlocking at least one of the locking means (9a, 9b).
13. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 1, characterized in that the body shells (1a, 1b) have holding means (5) for the camera (11).
14. Watertight body (10) according to Claims 1, 3 and 13, characterized in that the sealing means (2), the covering layer (3, 3a) and the holding means (5) are integrally formed.
15. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 1, characterized in that engaging elements (6a) are moulded on the inner wall of the body shell (1a) for holding the camera (11) provided with engaging elements (6b) and forming an integral unit with the body shell (1a).
16. Watertight body (10) according to Claims 1, 3 and 13, characterized in that the sealing means (2), the

covering layer (3) and the holding means (5) comprise a thermoplastic elastomer.

17. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 16, characterized in that the thermoplastic elastomer is a styrene-butadiene or polyurethane. 5
18. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 1, characterized in that the body shells (1a, 1b) comprise an optically transparent polystyrene or polycarbonate. 10
19. Watertight body (10) according to Claims 17 and 18, characterized in that the body shells (1a, 1b) as well as the sealing means (2), the covering layer (3) and the holding means (5) are formed from the material combination polystyrene/styrene-butadiene or polycarbonate/polyurethane. 15
20. Watertight body (10) having a first (1a) and a second (1b) body shell of rigid polymer material which can be joined together for accommodating a photographic camera (11), said body shells (1a, 1b) having surface areas to which elastic polymer material (2, 3, 3a) is applied using a multiple-component injection moulding process, characterized in that the body shells (1a, 1b) can be crushed without separation of the polymer materials using known devices, and in that the resultant material mix is usable as an admixture for the manufacture of new camera components. 20
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21. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 20, characterized in that the admixture to the new polystyrene material has a ratio not exceeding 25 : 100. 35
22. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 20, characterized in that the new camera components have a higher impact strength than polystyrene and are light-tight. 40
23. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 20, characterized in that the body shells (1a, 1b) comprise polystyrene and in that the elastic polymer material is a thermoplastic elastomer. 45
24. Watertight body (10) according to Claim 20, characterized in that the thermoplastic elastomer is a styrene-butadiene.
25. Method of manufacturing a photographic camera consisting of a first (1a) and a second (1b) body shell of rigid polymer material which can be joined together and have openings for a lens and a viewfinder, characterized in that at least the body shell (1a) forming the camera front is moulded in a tool using a rigid polymer material and that in the same tool a covering layer made of an elastic polymer material is then connected to the body shell (1a) by chain looping of the polymer materials using the 50
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two-pack injection moulding process.

26. Method according to claim 25, characterized in that in the areas around the lens (7) and the viewfinder (8) the body shell (1a) is moulded with areas not covered by the covering layer (3).

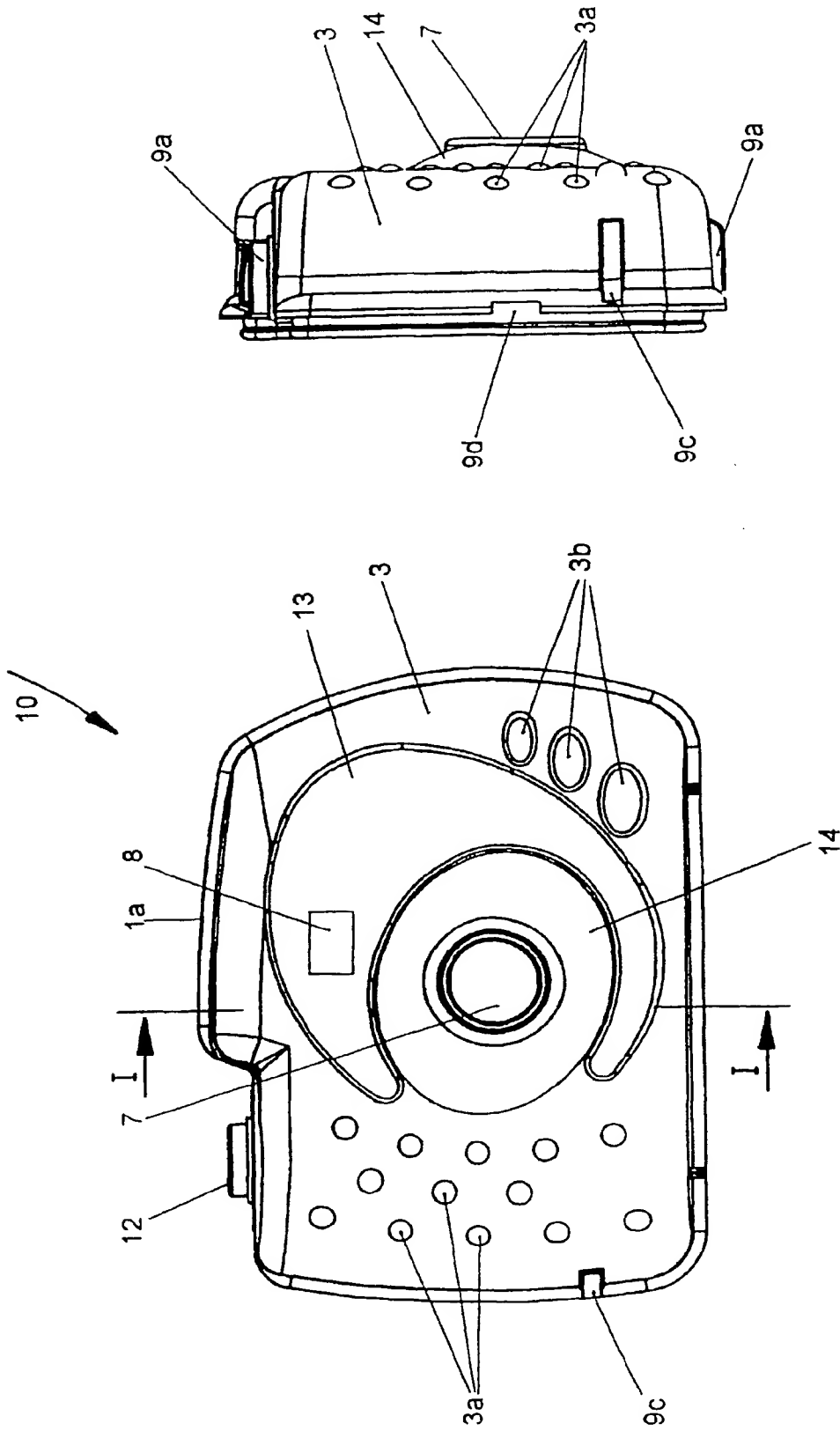


Fig. 2

Fig. 1

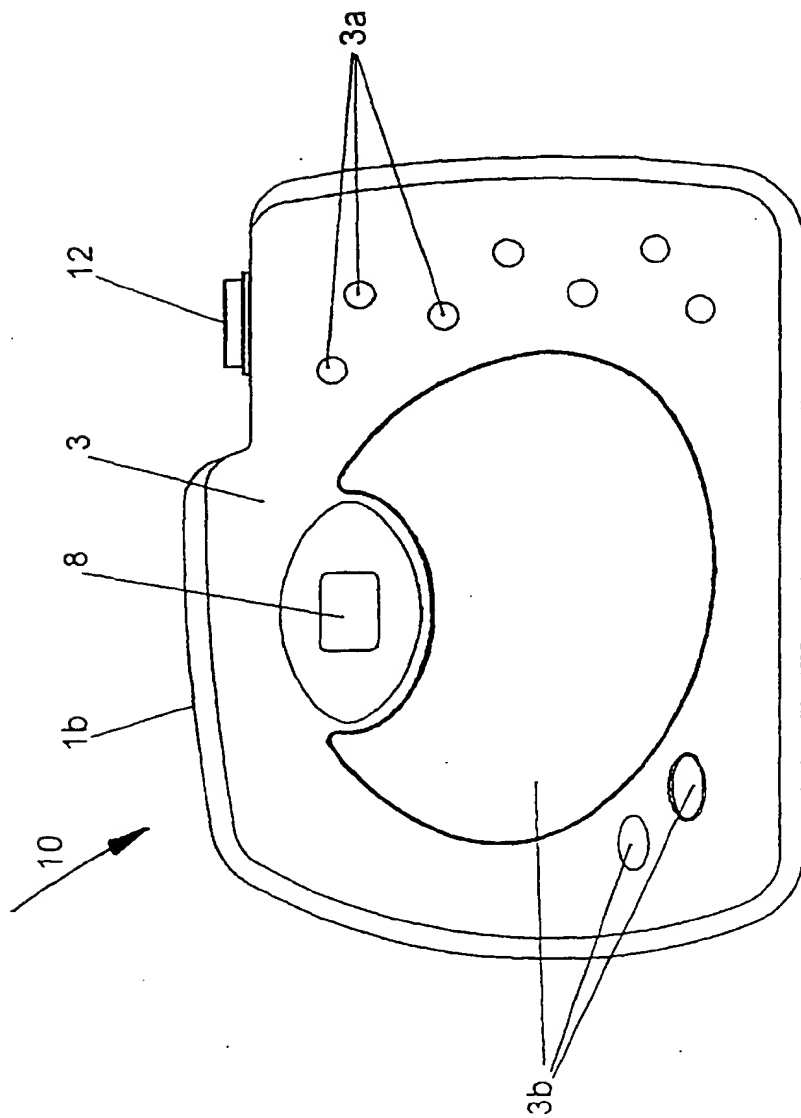


Fig. 3

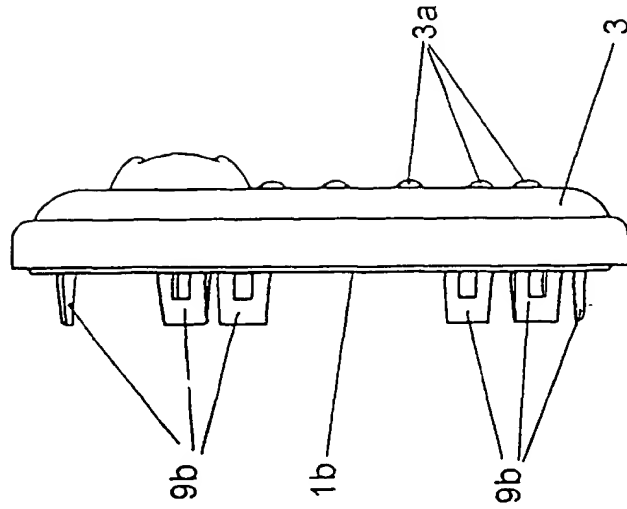


Fig. 4

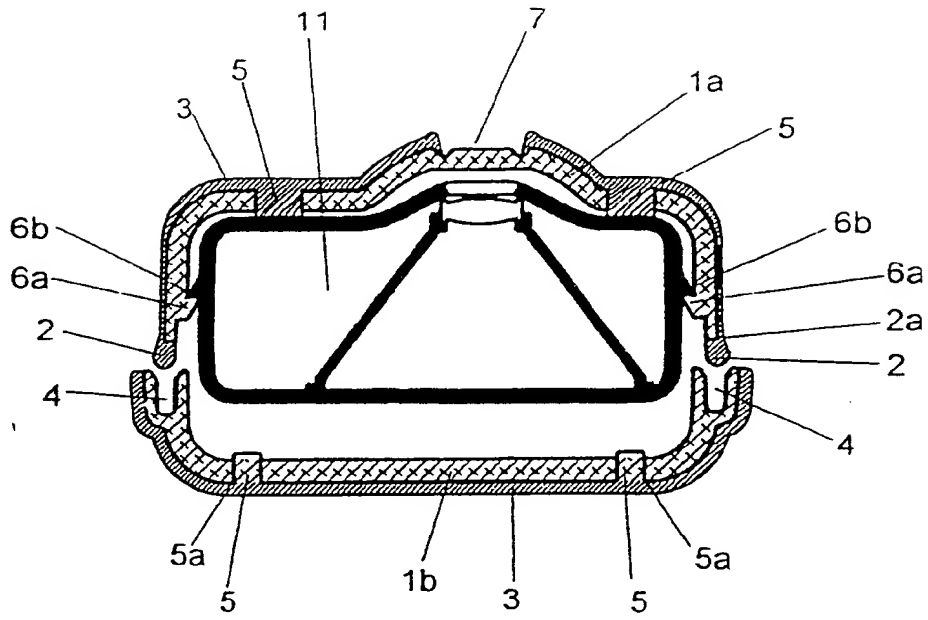


Fig. 5

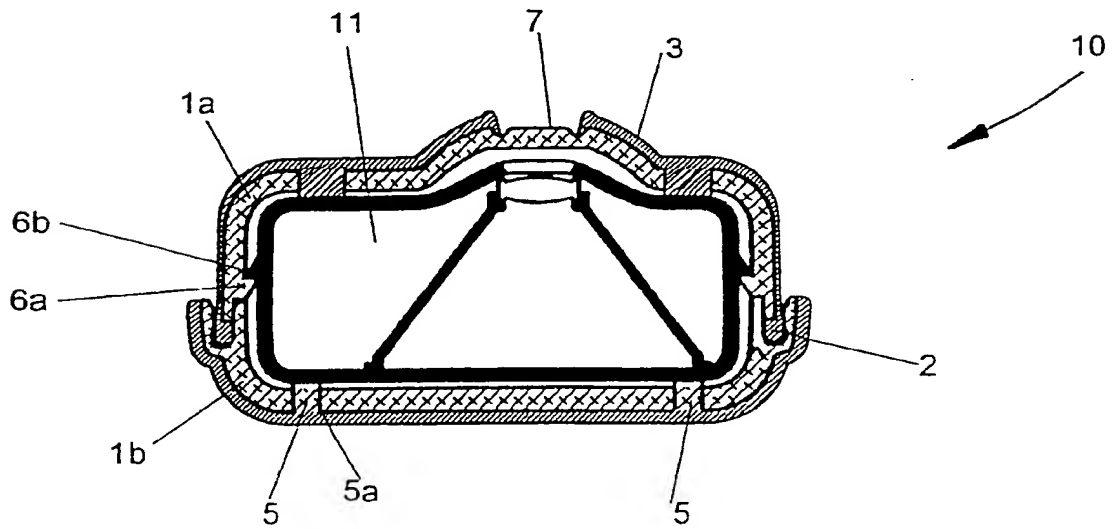
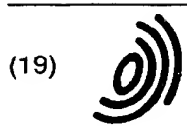


Fig. 6



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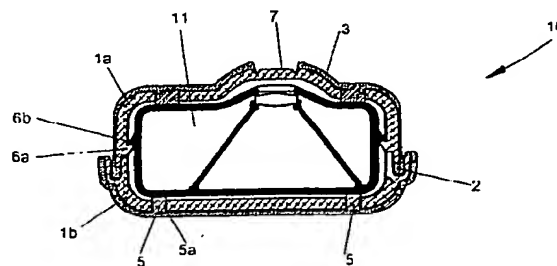


Fig. 6

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
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A	GB 2 011 309 A (DEMAG KUNSTSTOFFTECH) * page 1, line 1 - line 73 * ---	25	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 10 December 1997	Examiner Heryet, C
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner	
THE HAGUE	10 December 1997	Heryet, C	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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